

UCLA

FACULTY UNION

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, LOCAL 1990

c/o J. Blackburn, Institute of Industrial Relations, 9244 Bunche Hall, UCLA

May 25, 1979

Dear Colleagues:

Since all faculty members will soon be given an opportunity to make decisions with respect to collective bargaining representation, those of us who belong to the UCLA Local of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), wish to share with you our view of the present situation.

I. The Berman Act

The recently passed Berman Act lays down that after July 1 of this year, University of California employees will be free to choose an organization - or organizations - to represent them. For the purpose of choosing bargaining representatives, the Act separates University employees into units, defined by "the internal and occupational community of interest among the employees concerned." It establishes a "presumption" that "professional employees and non-professional employees shall not be included in the same representation unit;" and it separates Academic-Senate from non-Senate professional employees. The Act denies to employees the right to strike, and it defines the permissible areas for collective bargaining.

II. Choice of a Representative Organization

Two ways are provided by the Act in which an organization may obtain recognition as bargaining agent for a particular unit of employees:

- a) By demonstrating through signed cards or petitions that it has the support of a majority of employees within that unit. If within 15 days, other organizations offer proof of support, at least to the extent of 10% of employees in that unit, then the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) will hold hearings and may call an election.
- b) By demonstrating support from at least 30% of employees in the unit. An election will then be called. Other organizations which can show at least 10% support may participate in the election.

Here is the situation as it now stands: you have probably already received a card from the UCLA Faculty Association asking you to designate it as your representative. Attached to this letter is a card designating the AFT as representative. Even if you have sent in the other card, we urge you to sign and send in this card as well.

Neither card carries any commitment on your part to join either organization. Both organizations are following prescribed steps for entry into bargaining unit elections, and the Act specifically allows for multiple designations of support. Of course you may already have decided for one organization or the other; or you may feel a moral commitment to the organization for which you first signed a card. We respect this; but we feel it urgently important that a bona-fide election be held in order to guarantee full and open discussion of the complex issues involved. Only your signature can put competing organizations on the ballot. If there is no competition, the election - and the debate which it ought to elicit - go by default.

We believe such debate is desirable for two reasons: First, it will help to clear up the confusion now befogging the whole issue of collective bargaining in the academic setting. Second, it will bring into focus the fact that there is a real choice to be made.

III. How AFT Differs from the Faculty Association

The Faculty Association apparently conceives of a collegial relationship between faculty and administration in which needs and interests of faculty members (and their families!) can be discussed much as curricular matters are discussed in the Academic Senate. Administration presumably could then be relied on to work relentlessly for the best interests of the faculty. Under such circumstances, obviously, no outside sources of consultation or assistance would be needed.

Unfortunately this view of the matter is nostalgic and utopian. The University is a gigantic institution in which faculty - so far as decision-making power is concerned - occupies a low echelon. Administration interests do not always converge with those of faculty; and when they do there is no guarantee that administrators will be willing or able to speak effectively for faculty needs. The record of the past several years with respect to faculty salary suggests the contrary.

AFT believe that vigorous bargaining will be necessary and that improvements of faculty conditions will be few and far between unless backed up by the collective power of effective trade unionism. For this reason, the UCLA local is part of a national organization of teachers and professors, which in turn is affiliated to the national labor movement - the AFL-CIO. This does not mean that AFT favors a one-big-bag kind of unionism. It advocates - and practices - a structure of inter-related locals and divisions appropriate to "the internal and occupational community of interest among the employees concerned."

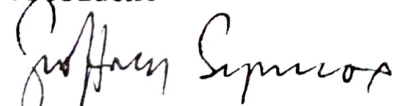
AFT believes that UCLA academic employees have needs and interests in common with academic employees at other campuses and institutions, as well as with people in many other salaried and wage situations; and that these common needs provide the basis for organizational relationships of mutual understanding and assistance. We are convinced that this approach represents a more realistic view of our situation than the nostalgic and isolationist outlook which at present appears to be that of the Faculty Association.

Of course you do not have to decide your position on these issues immediately. But we do want you to be aware of the issues. And we urge you to keep open the possibilities for discussion by making sure that there will be a choice of meaningful alternatives when the election does take place. You can do this by signing the attached card and dropping it in the mail. Your signature does not commit you to membership in the AFT, but it will help to guarantee the AFT a place on the ballot.

Sincerely,



Jack Blackburn
President



Geoffrey Symcox
Vice President

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